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President: Mr. Han Seung-soo ..... (Republic of Korea)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Botnaru (Republic of Moldova), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 39

Towards global partnerships

Report of the Secretary-General (A/56/323)

The Acting President: I should like to inform members that in a letter dated 22 October 2001 addressed to the President of the General Assembly, the Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations, in his capacity as Chairman of the group of Western European and other States for the month of October, requests that the General Assembly hear in plenary meeting a statement by the observer of Switzerland in the debate on agenda item 39, "Towards global partnerships".

In view of the importance attached to the issue under discussion, it is proposed that the General Assembly should take a decision on that request.

May I take it that there is no objection to the proposal to hear a statement by the observer of Switzerland in the debate on this item?

It was so decided.

Mr. Kazemi Kamyab (Islamic Republic of Iran): Speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, let me express first our deep appreciation, Sir, for your active and engaged stewardship of the work of the General Assembly. I should also like to take the opportunity to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General and the Secretariat for the timely reports prepared for this year's session, including for agenda item 39, "Towards global partnerships".

This is the second year in a row that we have been dealing with the question of partnership, which, if nothing else, should signify the importance of the subject to all members of the General Assembly, both developing and developed countries. Since the Group of 77 has had the opportunity in the past to present its general views on various aspects of global partnership, I do not intend to repeat positions and analyses which are fully known to the Assembly and our partners in the North. Instead, the emphasis in this statement will be on some of the elements and aspects which we consider prominent and urgent for our prospective work, as also addressed in the Secretary-General's report.

As we all know, it was only at the last session of the General Assembly that we started dealing with the question of partnership as a new agenda item, and that is why the discussion could still be considered at its exploratory stage. I should stress at this point that the Group of 77 and China attaches, as a matter of principle, great importance to the role and participation of stakeholders, including the private sector, in activities towards the realization of the United Nations goals and objectives. Based on this overall premise, we are well disposed and fully prepared to engage actively in a proactive and constructive dialogue with all

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interested negotiating partners on all aspects of this important subject.

The developing world and its sole universal deliberative body at the United Nations, the Group of 77 and China, are of the firm view that partnership, in its every aspect and at the national and global levels alike, should be conducive to development and the elimination of poverty. This can hardly be overemphasized. What is at issue, therefore, is the role the entire international community should play in this context. The question of building partnerships, an important emerging issue, finds its place within this overall framework. Put in very practical terms, the question for us is how to strengthen the development role of the United Nations system and how to enhance the effectiveness of its development activities and its support for national development strategies and for programmes by implementing various initiatives, including partnerships with all relevant partners and, in particular, private sectors. There is no need to emphasize that these initiatives should be thoroughly reviewed, discussed and refined by Member States. In other words, any actual progress on forging partnerships must by necessity await the intergovernmental body's elaboration and, more importantly, adoption of the requisite elements and modalities for the intended partnerships.

In a world somewhat fixated on market economics and corporate profitability, legislation and intergovernmental agreements should remain important components of any strategy to promote corporate responsibility and accountability. New initiatives in general, and partnerships in particular, should not lead to the further weakening of the regulatory role of State and intergovernmental bodies. It is necessary to reiterate the importance of the State in providing for the general welfare of its citizens. We should recognize that fact and not undermine or diminish the role of the State. The State is the one in charge of development, not the market or corporations, as they have totally different agendas. Meanwhile, we should not lose sight of the fact that for many small States, private sector and market involvement is almost non-existent and that the Government is the largest employer.

The cooperation between the United Nations and relevant partners should be aimed mainly at making a contribution to the realization of the goals and programmes of the Organization. Relevant partners, particularly the private sector, could contribute to the realization of the Organization's development goals through financial resources, transfer of technology, management expertise, in-kind donations, responsible investments and price reductions for drugs for treating HIV/AIDS and other diseases. We particularly hope that the transnational corporations, which have a great influence on the global economy, will join the efforts towards the realization of the development goals of the United Nations and take concrete measures to help developing countries in their efforts to promote development.

In our view, it is imperative that the United Nations and its related bodies should focus their work on issues central to the transfer of knowledge and technology and the building of necessary domestic capacities, with a view to promoting the competitiveness of developing countries. The Group of 77 and China is very much concerned that the resources available to the United Nations system to assist developing countries in meeting the challenges they face in designing the policies and strategies required to bridge the technology gap between the North and the South are simply inadequate. We support the recommendation made by the Secretary-General in his report that the resources the partners can contribute, in terms of expertise, funding and technology, should be a complement to governmental resources, not a substitute for them.

The Group of 77 and China agrees with the idea raised by the Secretary-General that the diversity of relationships between the United Nations and the relevant partners is such that it is not possible to adopt a one-size-fits-all institutional approach for dealing with all types of cooperation at all levels of the system. We take the view that in cooperation with relevant partners, the United Nations needs to follow a differentiated approach in line with the characteristics of the partners, as well as with the fundamental purpose of making contributions to the implementation of the development goals and programmes of the Organization.

With this in mind, and with due regard for the provisions in paragraph 1 of General Assembly resolution 55/215, which stresses,

> "the need for Member States further to discuss partnerships and consider, in appropriate intergovernmental consultations, ways and means to enhance cooperation between the United

> Nations and all relevant partners, inter alia, from the developing countries, to give them greater opportunities to contribute to the realization of the goals and programmes of the Organization",

the Group of 77 and China stands ready to contribute to collective intergovernmental endeavours towards evolving a common vision and realistic approaches to promoting partnership among all stakeholders.

Mr. Shen Guofang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): At the outset, I wish to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive and informative report under the item entitled "Towards global partnerships". The report has given us full and objective information on the cooperation between the United Nations and the relevant partners. We also appreciate the introduction to the report by the Secretariat. The Chinese delegation supports the statement by the representative of Iran on behalf of Group of 77 and China.

With the rapid development of globalization, the gap between the North and the South is widening, and the imbalance of economic development among countries is going from bad to worse. This is now an issue of great urgency facing the international community, and a solution needs to be found.

At the same time, we see that the private sector, especially the heavyweight transnational corporations, has at its disposal enormous amounts of financial resources and technology and is playing a considerable role in the globalizing economy. Therefore, to ensure that globalization becomes a positive force for all and to promote the balanced development of all economies in globalization, the relevant partners, in particular the private sector, need to make full use of their own advantages and make unique contributions to development in the developing countries. In this context, we support strengthening the cooperation between the United Nations and the relevant partners, in order to encourage the partners, in particular the private sector, to take part in activities aimed at realizing the development goals of the United Nations.

For the sake of effective cooperation between the United Nations and the relevant partners, including the private sector, and in order to give full play to the strengths of the partners to benefit the work of the United Nations, we believe that attention should be paid to the following in the process of establishing partnerships.

First, cooperation between the United Nations and the relevant partners should be carried out in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, as well as the relevant United Nations rules and procedures, without undermining the intergovernmental nature of the Organization, especially the decision-making process. This constitutes the basis of the partnerships. As the Secretary-General rightly pointed out in his report,

> "that cooperation must be managed in a manner that does not compromise the independence and neutrality of the United Nations or its character as an organization of Member States" (*A/56/323, para. 5*).

We fully agree with him on this point.

Secondly, partnerships between the United Nations and the relevant partners should be established in a manner that is helpful to the realization of the development goals of the United Nations. This constitutes the overriding priority of cooperation between the United Nations and relevant partners, in particular the private sector. We hope that the relevant partners can make full use of their own strengths and provide more substantive assistance to developing countries by mobilizing financial resources, transferring advanced technology, investing responsibly, sharing good management experience, reducing the prices of drugs for HIV/AIDS treatment and making donations, so as to make concrete contributions to the realization of the development goals of the United Nations.

The private sector has already carried out some activities in this regard. Some businesses have rendered valuable help in the form of donations to the work of the United Nations in the field of development. Non-governmental organizations have also played an active role in the implementation of United Nations development programmes. We express our appreciation for those efforts. But this is only the beginning. This is far from really satisfying needs in this regard. We hope that in the future more heavyweight and influential transnational corporations will join in efforts to realize the development goals of the United Nations and take concrete actions to help developing countries in the mobilization of financial resources and the promotion of economic growth. As the Secretary-General indicated in his report,

> "The resources that they can contribute, however, in terms of expertise, funding and technology, should be a complement to governmental resources, not a substitute." (*A/56/323, para. 119*)

Thirdly, the forms of cooperation between the United Nations and the relevant partners need to be flexible and diversified, so as to adapt to different situations and achieve better results. The Secretary-General pointed out in his report,

> "The diversity of relationships between the United Nations and non-State actors is such that it is not possible to adopt a 'one-size-fits-all' institutional approach for dealing with all types of cooperation, at all levels of the system." (*A/56/323, para. 116*)

We agree with this point. We believe that the United Nations should adopt different forms of cooperation with different partners, in accordance with their particular characteristics. The purpose of such cooperation should be to contribute to the implementation of the development goals of the United Nations.

Fourthly, apart from the above-mentioned aspects, we should be fully aware of the fact that the private sector has its own limits, which are rooted in its profit-driven nature. Therefore, the United Nations should have an appropriate assessment of the role of the relevant partners, including the private sector. The real manifestation of their importance, in any case, lies in the substantive help they can render us, not in empty slogans. We stand ready to work with all other delegations to explore specific ways and means in which the relevant partners, in particular the private sector, can make concrete contributions to the realization of the development goals of the United Nations.

Mr. Low (Singapore): Last year the General Assembly adopted resolution 55/215 entitled "Towards global partnerships". Through this resolution, we recognized the potential contribution that non-State actors can make towards realizing the United Nations goals set out in the Millennium Declaration. There are at least two good reasons why this is a move in the right direction.

First, as mentioned in the Secretary-General's report, the influence of non-State actors has grown tremendously over the last 10 years. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development estimates that there are now over 60,000 multinational corporations compared with 37,000 in 1990. These corporations drive the global expansion of investment flows. In fact, private sector flows far exceed intergovernmental financial flows. While foreign direct investment to developing countries increased from $44 billion in 1991 to $240 billion in 2000, official flows declined from $57 billion to $53 billion over the same period. The top 200 multinational companies have combined revenues totalling $7.1 trillion, which is larger than the combined economies of the 189 United Nations Member States.

The number of global non-governmental organizations and their networks has also risen from 23,600 in 1991 to 44,000 in 1999. Some of these have extensive global outreach, with thousands of direct members in different countries. Others have used the power of the Internet to mobilize individuals and organizations to support a particular cause and to influence Government and intergovernmental action.

Some non-State actors have agendas directly opposed to the goals of the United Nations; for example, industries that extract and exploit natural resources at the expense of developing countries. But there are also others that seek to be responsible corporate citizens and could share similar objectives. But whatever their shapes and sizes, the reality is this. We share the world stage today with many other influential non-State actors. We can choose to ignore them, but they will just go ahead on the same stage with their own different acts. But why do we not instead attempt to engage them and involve them in our own play? As the Secretary-General has said,

> "The United Nations once dealt only with Governments. By now we know that peace and prosperity cannot be achieved without partnerships involving Governments, international organizations, the business community and civil society. In today's world, we depend on each other."

True indeed, better to have them work with us than against us.

Secondly, non-State actors offer a variety of competencies, constituencies, resources and networks that can be better tapped to tackle the complex challenges facing countries and the global community today. Partnerships with non-State actors and their

constructive assimilation into the global architecture would allow countries, as well as the global community, to better reap the benefits of globalization and manage its costs.

Various studies have shown the extent to which globalization could benefit poor countries and the poor in these countries. A study by Jeffrey Frankel and David Romer demonstrates that a 10 per cent increase in the trade to gross domestic product ratio could raise per capita income by as much as 15 per cent. Combine this result with a more recent study by David Dollar and Aart Kraay of the World Bank and one would expect the greater trade openness to also generate a 15 per cent increase in the income of the poor. But all these "on paper" estimated benefits often come with qualifiers. They could only be realized in practice if coordinated actions are taken to promote trade and reforms in developing countries.

In Singapore, we face the same challenges of globalization as most other countries. Globalization has brought greater prosperity, but it has also posed new social challenges. What could divide our young nation are not just the traditional fault lines of race and religion, but new fault lines brought about because our people have varying abilities to adapt to the rapid pace of change. Structural unemployment, the widening income gap and the digital divide are but symptoms of these new fault lines.

Nonetheless, these challenges have not caused us to abandon our support for globalization. Instead, they have awakened us to the need for better measures to manage its costs. The Singapore Government has, through its policies and schemes, tried to help weaker Singaporeans cope. But while many of our poor may need assistance, they do not want to be forever dependent on assistance. What they want are decent-paying jobs that would allow them to make a living and bring up their families with dignity and pride. The Government cannot do this on its own. It needs to work with the private sector to attract new investments and create new jobs for our people. We also need to work with the people sector to offer training and opportunities to upgrade skills so as to equip our workers with the necessary set of skills to benefit from the new economy.

Globalization has created both winners and losers, within countries and among countries. The losers are those, be they countries or individuals, that lack the ability to adapt and to reap the benefits of the efficiency gains of an integrated global network. What they need, if they are to escape from poverty, are trade and investment and the ability to benefit from them — in addition to debt relief and official development assistance. All these go together, because countries are much more likely to attract investment if they have labour for production and markets for their products.

Governments can lower trade barriers and provide more official aid, but private companies are needed to help bring investments and jobs to countries. Non-governmental organizations and civil society groups can help raise the skill levels in countries so that the people are well positioned to benefit from globalization. Through their networks and influence, they can also generate the momentum for markets to become really open to products from developing countries.

This is a specific illustration of how greater partnership between the three Ps — the public, the private and the people — not just at the national level, but at the global level, can help us better reap the benefits and manage the costs of globalization.

United Nations agencies are already cooperating with businesses and other non-State actors on a large scale, to mutual benefit. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the International Chamber of Commerce, for instance, have teamed up to promote investment in least developed countries, especially in Africa. The United Nations, business and Governments are working together on practical investment guides which dispel the myth that there are no investment opportunities in these countries in Africa. Greater global partnerships would allow more benefits to be reaped.

While many would not argue with the rationale for greater global partnerships, debates often centre around the who and the how. Here, we have a few suggestions to make.

First, for global partnerships to be truly global and effective, they should involve more than just private corporations from the West. There are other global partners with valuable expertise, resources and networks to offer, and these include non-governmental organizations, media conglomerates, academic think tanks and corporations from the developing countries themselves.

Secondly, we should proceed to build global partnerships in a pragmatic and practical way. The marriage of global partners will never materialize if all parties carry unrealistic expectations and seek to realize through these partnerships their lifelong idealistic dreams. Global partnerships must be built on shared understandings and clear rules and principles. These would take time to develop and could evolve over time, but they are needed to harness the benefits of global partnerships and manage their risks and challenges. As much as the United Nations does not negate or attempt to be a substitute for the role of national Governments, global partnerships and the involvement of non-State players should not negate or attempt to be a substitute for Governments in their role as the key and central players in the inter-State process of the United Nations. The United Nations is still an Organization of States; other, non-State actors would play only a complementary role to provide inputs to the decision-making process and offer expertise, resources and networks for more effective implementation. Global partnerships are but a means to an end. They provide a collective approach to achieving the goals of the United Nations and remain paramount. They are definitely not, and should never be, an end unto themselves.

No one ever says marriage brings with it a bed of roses. No matter how compatible two partners are, there are bound to be some differences. These differences just have to be managed for one to enjoy the bliss of marriage. Similarly, I am confident that global partnerships will bring benefits to all parties involved if we are all ready to take the step with realistic expectations. Let us walk down the aisle together with our eyes wide open.

Mr. Sun Joun-yung (Republic of Korea): At the outset, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report on cooperation between the United Nations and all relevant partners, particularly the private sector. I also appreciate Mr. Harri Holkeri's dedication, in his former capacity as President of the General Assembly, to promoting partnership between the United Nations and civil society.

Non-governmental actors have been interacting with the United Nations since its founding. However, the rapid process of globalization has transformed the world in many aspects. It is remarkable to note that the scale and impact of those interactions have dramatically increased over the past 10 years. This change is due largely to an increase in the number, diversity and influence of civil society and private sector organizations.

It is commendable that the United Nations has thus far succeeded in promoting interactions with these organizations and forging global partnerships that were hardly conceivable even a decade ago. I would also like to refer to the resolution adopted by world leaders at the Millennium Summit, which expresses a need to develop strong partnerships with private sector and civil society organizations in pursuit of development and poverty eradication.

I am confident that the success of the United Nations will depend upon how we can design partnerships with non-State actors and strengthen such partnerships in a mutually supportive manner. The section of the report of the Secretary-General elaborating on types of cooperation between the United Nations and the private sector is fairly informative and provides us with many points for further consideration. In this regard, I have a couple of comments and suggestions.

First, in the areas of policy dialogue and advocacy for the United Nations values and activities, the existing initiatives have been consolidated in various forms. However, I wish to draw the Assembly's attention to the accreditation process for non-State actors in United Nations conferences and preparatory events, which varies from event to event. For the benefit of all participants, this process needs to be streamlined and to become more transparent and predictable. In this regard, I hope that, for the benefit of our discussions in the future, the Secretariat will analyse the modalities of non-State actors' participation in the major United Nations conferences. Considering the diversity of private sector and civil society organizations, we need to develop a flexible but effective mechanism to promote partnership, while avoiding a one-size-fits-all approach.

Secondly, I wish to commend the remarkable developments in the areas of information sharing and learning partnerships, aimed at building and disseminating cross-sectoral knowledge on critical developmental issues. Attention should also be paid to the launching of the Information and Communication Technologies Task Force and the establishment of the High-Level Policy Network on Youth Employment. These initiatives are new experiments for the United

Nations in drawing expertise and resources from both the public sector and non-State actors.

Thirdly, I attach great importance to the mobilization of private funds through philanthropic funds or investment capital. We need to explore ways to promote the great potential for partnerships, such as the United Nations Fund for International Partnerships and the United Nations Foundation. As for investment capital, the Initiative Deliverables endeavour has been recognized as a good option in this field. I also expect the Clean Development Mechanism under the Kyoto Protocol to be best utilized as a tool to invite private capital. Furthermore, I commend the Global Compact initiative of the Secretary-General, which calls on business leaders to embrace universally agreed principles in the fields of the environment, labour and human rights, and its follow-up initiatives, in close collaboration with the International Chamber of Commerce.

Against the backdrop of overall support for the role of the private sector and civil society, we have to address the legitimate concerns about potential dangers, such as conflict of interest, unfair advantage and governance risks, as indicated in the report of the Secretary-General. I do not believe that these risks are so enormous that the integrity of the United Nations can be threatened. However, we should pay attention with due diligence to potential areas of concern. In this regard, I commend the initiatives of the Secretariat to develop guidelines and modalities on partnerships, and hope that they will be further elaborated.

Another key challenge for the United Nations is how to ensure the adequate involvement of organizations from developing countries in partnership initiatives. I share the view that substantial support should be provided for non-State actors from developing countries in the fields of national and regional workshops, exchanges and public-private sector dialogues.

We can easily reach the conclusion that cooperation with non-State actors is essential to realizing the goals of the United Nations. However, I would like to stress that the growing cooperation with non-State actors should not supersede the primacy of Governments in national and international policy-making processes. Governments and international organizations should remain the principal bodies providing enabling environments to accommodate civil society organizations, including the private sector.

Last year the Republic of Korea joined the sponsors of resolution 55/215, entitled "Towards global partnerships", with the conviction that promoting partnerships with civil society organizations is a new frontier for the United Nations. We are committed to continuing to work towards enhanced interaction with new partners for the cause of this Organization.

Mr. Effah-Apenteng (Ghana): My delegation associates itself with the statement made by Iran on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

The report prepared by the Secretary-General on cooperation between the United Nations and all relevant partners, in particular the private sector, provides a comprehensive survey of the subject with a view to addressing concerns and expectations raised in previous discussions of this subject. The Secretary-General is to be commended for that and, more importantly, for the pioneering work he has done in opening up the possibilities for global partnerships through the Global Compact and other initiatives.

In this regard, it is worth pointing out that, while the Global Compact is a ground-breaking initiative, it is only part of a menu of global partnerships. Global partnerships go beyond the Global Compact initiative. The debate in the General Assembly should, therefore, embrace the rich variety of partnerships available as a result of a vastly changed and changing world environment. Indeed, the report gives an excellent overview of that environment and of the potential that it holds.

It is clear that, although global partnerships are not new, the ascendancy of free-market systems, the failure of the Washington Consensus and the evolution of globalization have all influenced the emergence of innovative and manifold networks, as well as a desire for a more coherent approach to global partnerships.

As the ability of State actors and Governments to influence development has been circumscribed by emerging sources of influence, the need has developed for lessons to be learned from the innovations and developments in global partnerships to exploit their potential and enhance their impact.

In that sense, the Global Compact indicates both the possibilities and the limitations of intergovernmental action. It is obvious that, had action

awaited a decision of the General Assembly, there would be no Global Compact now. The Compact has, as a first step, offered a way to influence corporate behaviour voluntarily in the absence of agreed rules of conduct for multinational corporations.

What lessons have we learned that can take us forward? There is the need for a strategic approach to global partnerships in the context of the General Assembly. The Assembly's role should be to define the vision and values which should guide the partnerships. These would include the following issues: determining public interventions which enhance the development impact of private activity; building understanding on ways of making developmental issues attractive to the private sector; eradicating poverty through public-private partnerships to leverage private capital flows to countries normally by-passed by such flows; addressing volatility, debt crisis and burden-sharing; dealing with corruption; and implementing in an equitable manner trade-related intellectual property rights and those related to issues such as technology transfer.

Other areas for dialogue would include those in which action may take the form of self-regulation or the sharing of best experiences. These could include the identification of areas requiring self-regulation; the role of business as a corporate network in the advocacy of global values; social responsibility through corporate governance; capacity-building initiatives through business internships; and support for educational funds. The potential of the private sector as an advocate for increased official development assistance, other capital flows and market access, in the context of the Millennium Declaration, is also a major issue for dialogue.

Such a strategic approach would enable the General Assembly to guide the evolution of the Global Compact, the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI), the global HIV/AIDS and health fund, the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) Task Force and other such initiatives.

While in the past, through its activities, the United Nations has been recognized as the global forum upholding the international community's values in humanitarianism and in sustainable development, its role in global partnerships should reinforce a vision of wealth creation, capable of bridging the gap between rich and poor countries and of stimulating support on the basis of enlarged markets and increased profit-making.

The General Assembly also needs to address ways of seeking effective partnerships with existing initiatives, such as the World Economic Forum, with a view to encouraging harmonization and adequate coverage worldwide and adding value through their respective comparative advantages.

The effectiveness of the United Nations in pursuing these objectives will depend on how successful the General Assembly is in using the lessons learned from other processes and in devising enabling mechanisms for partnerships, particularly with the private sector, which operates in a wholly different environment.

In this connection, there is a need for greater flexibility in the rules of the General Assembly to enhance greater access and participation by private-sector bodies. It is useful to contrast the General Assembly's current approach with that of the Global Compact and the World Economic Forum.

It would also be prudent to aim at a decentralized process in which a globally defined vision is intermediated at the regional and national levels. This would address the perennial problem of regional inputs in global discussions ending up diluted as a result of the give-and-take in negotiated outcomes.

It is clear that there cannot be effective global partnerships without the involvement of non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The current antagonism and stand-off between the private sector and the NGO community is therefore a major barrier to progress. The United Nations should provide leadership and a platform for building bridges between the private sector and the NGOs.

One sector of civil society whose involvement should be actively considered is business schools. Business education remains behind other disciplines in the area of integrating social values into professional mores.

In taking the next steps forward, the General Assembly will have to address a number of challenges relating to public-private partnerships in the context of its work.

Some of these challenges include the need to look at issues relating to conflicts of interest and to the protection of the integrity of the United Nations process. The Secretary-General's report discusses these issues in considerable detail. Despite the risks, however, the partnership offers a unique opportunity for the private sector to participate and become an agent of dialogue and change. The central role of the United Nations can only be enhanced as a result.

Devising the format for integrating global partnerships into the work of the United Nations will also constitute a major challenge for the General Assembly. The Assembly currently faces the danger of getting bogged down in the many items on its agenda.

In the case of global partnerships, there are inter-linkages with the Second Committee agenda item on globalization. The follow-up to the International Conference on Financing for Development is likely to address issues of global partnerships. The Executive Boards of United Nations funds and programmes should continue to deal with the operational aspects of partnerships. The discussions currently taking place in the United Nations on global public goods will become an issue of interest within that framework.

For all of these reasons, we support the proposal for the facilitation of a multistakeholder forum. We believe, however, that, given the experiences of the Preparatory Committee of the International Conference on Financing for Development in involving the private sector in its process, the planning and convening of a multi-stakeholder forum should be preceded by a serious exercise of reflection and debate on all these matters within the framework of an expert group. That consideration must take place within the context of the reforms of the General Assembly, if the outcome is to make an enduring contribution to the achievement of global goals.

If the private sector offers a variety of competencies, constituencies, resources and networks — as indeed it does — there can be no better place to engage them than in the home of all of the Members of the United Nations, the General Assembly.

Mr. De Loecker (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia — and the associated countries Cyprus, Malta and Turkey, as well as the European Free Trade Association countries members of the European Economic Area — Iceland and Norway — align themselves with this statement.

The European Union (EU) attaches particular importance to the current debate on global partnerships with civil society, in particular the private sector. It is clear that, without active participation on the part of all actors involved in the globalization process — governmental and non-governmental — it will not be possible to meet the 2015 target for the sustainable development goals set since the major conferences on the subject and, more recently, in the Millennium Declaration. The private sector has the technological, industrial and financial strength to influence this world. Indeed, sometimes its strength far surpasses the capabilities of States. As is stated in the Secretary-General's report, direct foreign investment in developing countries rose from $43 billion in 1991 to $240 billion in 2000. This shows clearly that public financing alone cannot meet the 2015 target.

Fortunately, the question of global partnerships is not confined to development financing. The European Union believes that in order to achieve the aims set out in the Charter of the United Nations, in particular "solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character" and "promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction", it is essential to enhance cooperation not only between Member States but also between the Organization and the private sector, which is closely involved in all these issues.

The European Union would therefore argue for partnerships to be understood in the widest possible sense, not just in terms of mobilizing additional resources. Financing issues will take centre stage at the International Conference on Financing for Development, set for next year in Monterrey.

The European Union sees partnerships with the private sector as a way of exercising a leverage effect on international action by the public sector. The advantage most often quoted is the ability to mobilize, assemble and pool the expertise and the various capacities and resources that each sector has to offer. Some multinational corporations or large foundations have the power to make an enormous contribution in terms of resources. The European Union welcomes the

fact that innovative forms of partnership, such as the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI), are becoming more and more important in United Nations operational activities. GAVI is an excellent example of a coalition of Governments; United Nations bodies; philanthropic foundations such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation; the pharmaceuticals industry; technological institutes; and research centres.

Partnerships allow the United Nations to increase public awareness and to reach out to a larger audience, because corporations and chief executives will defend their values, objectives and activities. This is another advantage of partnerships. They can also help to test new methods for programme implementation, governance and the formulation of standards in the fields of human rights, environment and labour.

In this context, the Global Compact is an excellent example of successful cooperation between the United Nations and the private sector. In particular, it establishes that corporations bear a social responsibility based on the fundamental values of the United Nations.

The Global Compact offers the private sector the ability to take part in actual partnerships with the United Nations system, in particular to benefit developing countries.

It has been observed in some quarters that partnerships between the United Nations and the private sector must inevitably bring together actors with very different interests and motives, with different types of resources and expertise, and expecting different outcomes and benefits. These differences are not necessarily obstacles to reaching agreement on common objectives. The European Union is convinced that, despite everything, it is these differences which will enrich the process of seeking common solutions to problems.

The European Union can understand the concerns expressed in certain quarters about partnerships with the private sector and the risk that the pursuit of profit and the promotion of private individual advantage might take precedence over the public good. In this case, the Union considers that partnership must not compromise the United Nations independence or prevent it from defending the general interest and acting accordingly. But it is clear that the primary motivation of the private sector will remain that of profit. This is not incompatible with the universal values defended by the United Nations. By respecting universal values such as human rights, labour standards and environmental protection, the private sector can enhance its image, boosting its credibility in the eyes of its customers and thus, in the long term, its profits.

Another misunderstanding that should be redressed is the impression that the United Nations system is working only with Western multinational corporations and not paying enough attention to establishing partnerships with enterprises and trade associations from the developing countries. We should like the United Nations system to expand its partnerships to include more enterprises from the developing countries. The European Union will promote participation in partnerships by the private sector of developing countries, if necessary, through capacity-building projects.

Partnerships must correspond to joint commitments entered into by partners in a spirit of mutual respect and in the pursuit of common objectives. The European Union believes that when the United Nations draws up the detailed arrangements governing partnerships with the private sector, it should retain the full measure of flexibility necessitated by the mission of such partnerships.

At the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council in July 2001, the Member States urged the United Nations to continue to step up its efforts to ensure that the principles and ways and means governing partnership agreements were based on firm foundations, without imposing any rigidity. The flexibility and innovation required in cooperating with the business world and in carrying out the different mandates and activities of United Nations bodies might well suffer from an over-centralized, institutionalized approach. The European Union is convinced that it would be wrong to set too formal a framework and thus risk discouraging the most generous or innovative initiatives from the private sector. The United Nations system must be open-minded towards private-sector actors. For example, it is not desirable to make the accreditation process too strict. The procedure should remain flexible and open.

We hope to continue this fundamental debate with our partners on this agenda item of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly, in the hope of reaching useful conclusions without lingering too long

over questions of principle or doctrine but trying, above all, to work out "good practice" which will lead to partnership strategies with the best chance of success. The European Union wants to introduce a draft resolution that will open to informal negotiation and to additional sponsors. It hopes to gain maximum support so that this draft resolution will achieve the broadest possible consensus within our gathering.

Mr. Navarette (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, my delegation would like to express its appreciation to the Secretary-General for his excellent report on agenda item 39, "Towards global partnerships", which is now before us. The information and recommendations contained in this document will unquestionably facilitate our debate.

The Millennium Declaration reflects the commitment of the Heads of State and Government of our countries to establish solid forms of cooperation with the private sector and with the organizations of civil society to promote development, to eradicate poverty and to offer the private sector, non-governmental organizations and civil society in general more opportunities to contribute to the attainment of the Organization's goals and programmes.

My delegation would like to take this opportunity to confirm Mexico's commitment to these important objectives. These goals have guided my Government's work not only internationally but also increasingly in the domestic area within our borders.

The statistics that have already been referred to this morning show us quite convincingly how civil society and private enterprise have increased. In particular, we should point to the existence of millions of small enterprises and micro-enterprises, in both the regulated and the unregulated sectors of the economy. These enterprises play a critical role in the creation of employment and wealth at the local level. This quantitative increase in the agents of civil society and of the private sector has been accompanied, naturally enough, by a qualitative influence on actions being taken by the United Nations system and actions being developed at the global, national and local levels.

As the Secretary-General's report says, these actors have a variety of skills, represent interest groups, resources and networks that must not be disregarded. For this reason, my delegation believes that we must be imaginative enough to find and implement practical ways and means to guide these actions towards the achievement of the goals of the Millennium Declaration. The challenge now is to use the potential of the creative energies of civil society and of the private sector to promote sustainable development without compromising the independence, the equity, the universality and the multilateral nature of the United Nations system.

The Mexican delegation believes that it is necessary that United Nations Member States continue to develop and perfect the principles and guidelines that will govern cooperation agreements with the private sector and with civil society, but we must not make cooperative machinery rigid. We must ensure that the principles of common purpose, transparency and the absence of favouritism be respected.

Furthermore, Mexico believes that special attention must also be paid to links with the private sector in such a way as to avoid the kinds of errors that might give credibility or legitimacy to enterprises whose practices contradict the basic principles and the Charter of the Organization or which give rise to conflicts of interest.

Furthermore, the dynamic and productive nature of the private sector obliges the United Nations to improve its working methods. As the report of the Secretary-General says, it is crucial to avoid duplication of effort in a number of areas and to rectify the lack of commonality and central coordination among organizations, which is an obstacle to effective interaction between the United Nations system and the private sector.

Here, my delegation supports the proposal just offered by the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea: that we simplify the process of accrediting non-governmental participants in United Nations conferences, including the preparatory processes. Such procedures must be simplified and made more transparent and more effective.

My delegation stresses that recognizing the need for cooperation with the private sector and civil society does not mean replacing the central functions and responsibilities of Government in the formulation of national and international policy. The delegation of Mexico also stresses that the private sector can make a multifaceted contribution to development; this must be used in an effective and constructive way. The greatest contribution that domestic and foreign enterprises can make to attaining the objectives of the Millennium

Declaration is in the form of private investment and the adoption of agreed, transparent measures guaranteeing that such investment has positive economic, social and environmental effects. Similarly, the private sector can use its influence to support the existence and consolidation of free and independent information media, to combat bribery and corruption and to promote good governance at the institutional, national and international levels.

My delegations takes this opportunity to express high appreciation to civil-society and private-sector entities — notably the International Chamber of Commerce, the World Economic Forum, the Business Council for the United Nations, the Social Investment Forum and the African Forum for Investment Promotion — for their constant, determined, constructive participation in the preparatory process for the International Conference on Financing for Development, to be held in Monterrey, Mexico, in 2002. The participation of those entities in the Monterrey Conference preparatory process, alongside the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Development Programme and States Members of the United Nations, renews our hope that, in keeping with the Millennium Declaration, we are laying the indispensable groundwork for a more peaceful, prosperous and just world.

Mr. Bhattacharjee (India): We have read with great interest the comprehensive and informative report of the Secretary-General entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and all relevant partners, in particular the private sector" (A/56/323). There can be no doubt that the process of globalization, characterized by liberalization of trade and capital as well as by rapid strides in information and communication technologies, has resulted in enhancing the financial resources and technological capacities of the private sector. Some of its members have used their profits philanthropically by contributing to the United Nations, Governments, non-governmental organizations and charities, and even by spending directly on social development projects. There is growing awareness that the business community can contribute to the global objectives of development and poverty eradication. Combining the pursuit of profit-making with the principles of social responsibility might actually result in creating sustainable business opportunities in the long run.

The Secretary-General's concept of a voluntary Global Compact has aroused some interest in the corporate world. Companies from India too have joined in that initiative, reflecting their desire to make a better world by sharing responsibility and by contributing to national efforts in the fight against poverty, hunger, illiteracy and disease.

The idea of global partnerships with all relevant partners, including the private sector, generated considerable debate and discussion in the United Nations last year. The intergovernmental process has not yet accepted or endorsed the Secretary-General's Global Compact. That is not because the concept of partnership is new, or because partnership is considered irrelevant. After all, as is clear from the Secretary-General's report, the private sector has been interacting with the United Nations since the Organization's founding. The International Labour Organization is based on a tripartite partnership, and the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization represents a successful partnership. More recently, the Global AIDS and Health Fund and the Information and Communication Technology Task Force have been set up by co-opting the private sector.

At the Millennium Summit, our leaders resolved to develop strong partnerships with the private sector and with civil-sector organizations in pursuit of development and poverty eradication. Partnership was clearly recognized as a significant and effective instrument for attaining development goals. The debate last year, in our view, reflected the desire of Member States to establish a viable partnership in which the terms of reference, the rules of engagement and the interrelationships are clearly defined. Private companies operate in the territories of nation-States and in accordance with their national laws. If Governments are not involved in discussions on the nature and scope of the global partnership there will, at best, be limited engagement with the United Nations. It is important that all partners be equally engaged. That is precisely the exercise that we are engaged in at the moment.

We acknowledge that global partnership is an interesting and useful initiative but, as it develops from the present experimental phase, we would recommend that a few points be kept in mind. First of all, the

principle on which it is currently based is a partial and arbitrary selection from a comprehensive set of social and development compacts that Member States have carefully negotiated; it runs the risk of giving greater weight to one set of principles at the cost of others.

While it is not, therefore, universal in scope, the initiative also draws on some principles that are distilled from conventions or other legal instruments to which not all Member States are party; the fact that companies in the global partnership operate in those countries should not force their Governments to change their local laws or impose conditionalities for investment.

The purpose and objective of the partnership is not clear. What is the partnership between United Nations and the private sector to do? To commit one partner to follow, voluntarily, some of the principles of social behaviour set by the other can constitute only a limited partnership. In that case, the United Nations becomes the sleeping partner. The global partnership does not commit the private sector to the promotion of any economic and development goals, which in our view, must be the objective of the global partnership.

In the era of globalization and competition for foreign direct investment, there is a danger of a rush to the bottom. It would be good if the global partnership did not force Governments to lower their standards. We also need to guard against some private sector companies using the global partnership as an excuse for pulling out of countries which are no longer profitable by arguing that they are doing so because local conditions are incompatible with their other objectives under the global partnership.

In addition, we would like to seek the incorporation of the following principles in the global partnership. Cooperation between the United Nations and relevant partners, including the private sector, should be in accordance with the Charter and the principles of the United Nations, without compromising in any way the independence and neutrality of the United Nations.

The global partnership should aim at contributing to the achievement of development goals and the eradication of poverty. The private sector can do this through financial resources, transfers of technology, capacity-building and social spending, and by adopting responsible corporate policies. We would encourage such an approach by the private sector, at both the national and the international levels.

We seek enhanced dialogue and consultation with the private sector in the United Nations — within agreed mechanisms — with the intergovernmental machinery and with the United Nations system. Their involvement through financial contributions and in the implementation of projects would also be welcome. The engagement with the private sector should not, however, change or dilute the intergovernmental nature and decision-making process of the United Nations.

Even though involved with the global partnership, private corporations, while continuing their business operations, must abide by the law of the land and local rules and regulations. Involvement with partnerships cannot provide exemption from accountability to relevant national institutions.

The global partnership should have a balanced composition, with business companies of developing countries being adequately represented. We would also encourage a partnership between the private sectors of developed and developing countries that promotes the transfer of technology and the development of human capacity.

My delegation is ready to engage in a constructive dialogue. We believe that we are moving forward not only in the process of evolving a global partnership with the private sector, but also in enhancing a better understanding of good corporate practices and responsible corporate behaviour.

Mr. Ordzhonikidze (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): As is well known, the priority tasks set forth in the Millennium Declaration include the development of lasting partnership relations between the United Nations and the private sector. In its resolution 55/215, entitled "Towards global partnerships", which Russia co-sponsored, the General Assembly defined the framework for a further search for optimal ways, areas and mechanisms of cooperation between the United Nations and the private sector.

The expansion of business relations between the United Nations and the private sector is an imperative of the times that deserves all possible support and encouragement. The globalization of the world economy, which has become an irreversible process, has made business one of the leading forces behind the accelerated development of productive forces, and the

key participant in world economic relations; hence the relevance of today's discussion.

We share the opinion that the main objective of cooperation between the United Nations and non-State actors is enhancing the effectiveness of the Organization in the interests of all Member States, subject to an unwavering commitment to the principles of its Charter. Such cooperation is not a goal in itself, but one of the potentially powerful means of fulfilling the tasks facing the United Nations system. At the same time, it has to serve the interests of the Governments of Member States and contribute to the strengthening of the Organization's authority.

The instruments of such cooperation include the mobilization of private sector financial resources for programmes implemented by the United Nations in support of development and of efforts to eradicate poverty and backwardness, with the United Nations playing a leading role in striking an optimal balance of interests between the private sector and the recipient Governments in the implementation of specific programmes and projects.

We realize that this will require rapid development by the Secretariat, and adoption at the intergovernmental level of guidelines regulating the interaction between the United Nations and private business. While maintaining the necessary flexibility, those guidelines should ensure unity of purpose, clear delineation of functions and responsibilities, accountability, transparency, inadmissibility of unjustified advantages and the preservation of the independent and unbiased character of the United Nations. And, of course, the development of partnership relations with the private sector should by no means undermine the intergovernmental character of the Organization and of its decision-making mechanisms. In this context, we support the initiative of the Secretariat concerning the establishment of a working group to consider measures to enhance coherence and capacity, including in the field of cooperation with the private sector.

The eradication of poverty and the promotion of economic growth and sustainable development should become the focus of the joint efforts by the United Nations and the private sector. In our opinion, these areas are intrinsically suitable for the development of United Nations private sector partnerships based on the mutual interests of the parties. As regards other promising areas of cooperation with the private sector mentioned in the report of the Secretary-General — areas such as peace and security, disarmament, human rights, democracy and good governance — we feel they can be explored after a comprehensive analysis of the relevant experience gained in the field of promoting development.

As the Assembly is aware, Russia has actively supported the Global Compact launched by Secretary-General Kofi Annan. The involvement of Russian business circles in the cooperation with the United Nations in the framework of the Global Compact has major advantages, both in terms of the development of a socially responsible national private sector and as a possible way to strengthen its international position. We also see here certain opportunities for attracting foreign private capital and technologies to the Russian economy. Such partnership relations are equally important in order to promote in Russian business practices international standards in the field of management, accounting, audit and environmentally safe production. The implementation of the Compact is, of course, in the interests of all partners participating in world economic relations. Indeed, it helps them reach for the highest requirements and standards of world business, including through interaction with other United Nations cooperating partners, many of which belong to the elite of world business.

In line with our consistent policy aimed at the development of cooperation between Russian businessmen and the United Nations, a high-level round table on the subject will be held in Moscow on 19 November this year. The sponsors of this event are the Russian Union of Manufacturers and Businessmen and the Foreign Ministry of Russia. The participants will include Deputy Secretary-General Fréchette and the heads of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Office for Project Services, the United Nations Environment Programme, the International Labour Organization, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the Economic Commission for Europe and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. Russian business will also be represented at the highest level — more than 30 chief executive officers of major Russian companies are expected to attend. We also expect to see in Moscow business leaders from around the world, including heads of major transnational

corporations, which already have a history of fruitful cooperation with the United Nations.

We hope that this event will give a new impetus to the process of developing lasting partnerships between the Russian private sector and the United Nations agencies, in order to find solutions jointly to the contemporary problems of globalization.

Mr. Moura (Brazil): The search for improved interaction between the State and new forms of organization of civil society organizations has been a feature of modern democracy. As a result, it has been possible to better identify the public interest and pursue more appropriate policies. At present, social demands are more comprehensive and diversified. In this increasingly important public debate, old demands have become more visible and new ones have flourished.

In Brazil, this practice has resulted in a more transparent dialogue between the State, civil society as a whole and the private sector towards a fair and balanced distribution of responsibilities. The private sector is an important partner in our development efforts. Over the past decade, Brazil has carried out an ample process of privatization and has attracted foreign investments. The efficiency of the public administration has increased and so has social justice, since it has been possible for the Government to concentrate its efforts and resources on measures in the interest of those most in need.

In the search for a more genuine, inclusive and equitable globalization, the active role of both the public and the private sectors is essential in fostering development. It is true that sometimes there can be a conflict of interest between these actors. That has been the case in Brazil, for example, with regard to the prices of HIV/AIDS medicines, which were reduced by the private companies only after the Government started buying generic versions. Other countries, faced with an epidemic or the threat of an epidemic, have lately taken similar measures. International rules, while protecting private interests, should not prevent Governments from safeguarding the health of their populations.

In spite of these different interests, it is clear that there is room for cooperation between the Government and non-State actors, from which both sides can benefit. Nobody disputes the increasing importance of the private sector. Ten years ago, there were 37,000 transnational corporations; now, there are 60,000. The amount of foreign direct investment in the world last year was six times as large as in 1991.

The report of the Secretary-General, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and all relevant partners, in particular the private sector", provides us with many examples of how numerous important partnerships have been developed in the United Nations system, covering areas as diversified as HIV/AIDS, information technology and the environment. These partnerships occur at a time when so-called good corporate citizenship is becoming more relevant to the private sector and society as a whole. Companies sell not only their products, but also their brands and, in so doing, they try to associate themselves with a desirable image and positive behaviour. One can argue as to whether this attitude reflects genuine partnership concerns or enlightened self-interest. Nevertheless, the fact is that companies are willing to collaborate in partnerships.

The United Nations should seize this opportunity to explore new channels of cooperation with the private sector, thereby contributing to turning globalization into a more equitable and inclusive process. As the report before us shows, partnerships can effectively contribute to the realization of the United Nations goals in various ways — for instance, by supporting specific projects, funding programmes or putting into practice principles laid out by international treaties.

The Global Compact stands out as one of these important initiatives. Until 2002, more than 1,000 enterprises from all regions are expected to be engaged in the Global Compact and committed to its nine principles in the areas of environment, labour standards and human rights.

More than 200 Brazilian companies are taking part in this initiative, thus contributing to the spread and consolidation of sound corporate practices in our country. The first official meeting of the Global Compact in Brazil, held in Belo Horizonte on 18 and 19 October, decided to speed up the introduction of the initiative in Brazil by bringing in new companies. It also identified areas for cooperation with United Nations agencies and created a working group to develop an academic curriculum on corporate citizenship.

The Brazilian Government is pleased with this positive reaction to the Global Compact. Nevertheless,

we are also aware that the partnerships are not devoid of risks. One of these is the reputation risk, which is translated into a loss of credibility as a result of the selection of inappropriate companies.

Therefore, it is important to ensure that private companies are living up to their commitments. With regard to the Global Compact, for instance, it is necessary to make sure that the companies are following the principles. The Secretary-General took a step in that direction by urging that the participating enterprises provide, at least once a year, a concrete example of progress made or a lesson learned in implementing the principles. The Global Compact could also promote a significant increase in the number of common projects between these firms and the United Nations with a view to putting into practice specific United Nations goals. It is also worth noting that, next year, the Compact will promote a policy dialogue on practical experiences concerning sustainability, in support of the Rio+10 meeting. Moreover, in order to avoid risks, all partnerships should pursue certain principles and objectives, such as mutual purpose, transparency, accountability and the advancement of United Nations goals.

In the Millennium Declaration, our heads of State and Government decided to create more opportunities for the private sector to contribute to the realization of the United Nations goals. Now, it is the role of the General Assembly to give policy guidance to the United Nations system so that these activities can take place in an appropriate manner. We believe that our first step should be the definition of general objectives and principles with this aim.

Mr. Laurin (Canada) (*spoke in French*): Canada welcomes the report of the Secretary-General, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and all relevant partners, in particular the private sector". We also welcome the Secretary-General's recommendations, as requested in General Assembly resolution 55/215, "Towards global partnership".

At the Millennium Summit, our leaders recognized that a central challenge we face today is to ensure that globalization becomes a positive force for all the world's people. Our leaders resolved in the Millennium Declaration to give the private sector, non-governmental organizations and civil society in general greater opportunities to contribute to the realization of the United Nations goals and programmes.

Many of the problems facing the world cannot be solved or overcome by States acting alone. States simply lack the resources to deal with all the challenges confronting the United Nations — such as development, eradicating poverty, fighting disease, protecting the environment or responding to emergencies — without the help of individuals and organizations. The contribution of civil society is essential to achieving the goals that Member States have set for the United Nations. Accordingly, the United Nations must engage civil society in its work.

Civil society, including non-governmental organizations and the private sector, possesses a great deal of expertise, experience and resources that can be of critical importance in dealing with international challenges. In fields such as humanitarian assistance, civil society is essential in providing food, shelter and medical care to people in need, be it because of natural disasters or complex emergencies. In development, civil society, in particular the private sector, plays a key role in providing the trade, investment and resources needed to develop each country's potential, thereby improving living standards. Civil society is also actively involved in protecting the environment and promoting sustainable development, in improving working conditions, and in promoting and protecting human rights and achieving social development goals.

Because cooperation between civil society and the United Nations is growing in importance, it follows that there should be increased opportunities for civil society to participate in discussions at the United Nations. To ensure that the United Nations is relevant to the people of the world, we must involve them in the design and implementation of United Nations plans and programmes.

(*spoke in English*)

Canada welcomes the attention the Secretary-General's report gives to the work of the Secretary-General's Global Compact. The Compact is a positive and forward-looking initiative to engage civil society, including non-governmental organizations and the private sector, in support of the objectives of the United Nations. The strength of the Compact lies in the fact that its key principles are derived from three important and widely accepted international instruments: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Labour Organization's Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at

Work, and the Rio Declaration. We support the Compact's approach, based as it is on partnerships, learning and the dissemination of best practices. These provide its participants — civil society and the United Nations — with the legitimacy and tools needed to translate global principles into viable solutions.

Canada shares the report's conclusion that creating alliances with non-traditional partners such as the private sector benefits Governments, the United Nations and other multilateral organizations. While private-sector action is never a substitute for government action, the private sector can be an important partner in sharing information, developing strategies, providing resources and increasing credibility. For both the United Nations and the private sector, increased collaboration can result in a better understanding of local conditions. This should lead to the development of more sustainable strategies and help leverage the capacity of the private sector to make a positive contribution to sustainable development.

Through initiatives such as the Global Compact, which seeks to integrate broadly accepted international principles into the day-to-day operations of the private sector, the private sector is also recognizing the benefits of working in partnership with the United Nations. Working in partnership with the United Nations can help corporations and businesses ensure that their strategies and projects are consistent with, and contribute to, the promotion of human rights and social development goals, labour standards and protection of the environment.

Canada supports the work that is being done to advance partnerships in areas such as global public policy networks, global knowledge and learning networks, and voluntary codes and standards, and in facilitating private investment and fund-raising. Canada welcomes the opportunity to further explore how the private sector and other civil society actors can be better integrated into the full range of United Nations activities.

The report rightly focuses on the need to further enhance the capacity of developing countries to pursue economic, social and environmental goals. We recognize the importance of working with governments and civil society on methods of deepening dialogue, raising awareness of key issues and discussing ways to promote principles of good conduct in the domestic and international business communities.

Through the Canadian International Development Agency, Canada encourages and supports private-sector investment and activities that make a positive contribution economically, socially and environmentally. Canada will continue to support the developing countries in their efforts to work with the private sector in promoting sustainable development, particularly in identifying ways in which official development assistance can contribute to such an approach.

Canada is actively promoting corporate social responsibility in the Americas. We worked hard to secure a commitment in the 2001 Summit of the Americas Plan of Action to the continued analysis and consideration of promoting corporate social responsibility at the Organization of American States and, in particular, to the convening of a hemispheric meeting in early 2002.

Canada supports this year the draft resolution on partnerships. We welcome its focus on the role of the private sector in developing countries as well as the recognition of the role that small- and medium-sized enterprises can play in partnerships with the United Nations.

Canada agreed with Secretary-General Kofi Annan when he said:

> "By now we know that peace and prosperity cannot be achieved without partnerships involving Governments, international organizations, the business community and civil society. In today's world, we depend on each other."

By engaging civil society, including the private sector, in partnerships, the United Nations will greatly increase its capacity to address the challenges confronting the world and to achieve the goals we have set for this Organization.

Mr. Hassan (Pakistan): We are thankful to the Secretary-General for his report on cooperation between the United Nations and all relevant partners, in particular the private sector.

We would like to associate ourselves with the statement made by the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Although the current debate started only two years ago, the history of the United Nations partnership

with non-State actors is as old as the Organization itself. The fact that the Economic and Social Council's Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations was established in June 1946 itself speaks of the antiquity of this relationship. Today, thousands of non-governmental organizations are registered with various United Nations agencies as their partners or collaborators. Similarly, the private sector, international financial institutions and multinational corporations are collaborating with various United Nations agencies around the world. With the help of these partners, United Nations agencies have achieved some major successes, especially in the areas of health, nutrition, poverty eradication and development. The United Nations Children's Fund's Global Alliance for Vaccination and Immunization — GAVI — the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS's low-cost drug initiative in Africa, and the World Health Organization's Roll Back Malaria initiative are a few examples of many such successful partnership initiatives.

The world now faces many complex and multidimensional challenges. Globalization is reshaping economic, social, cultural and political values. It has accentuated the disadvantaged position of vulnerable groups and caused growing economic inequalities among countries and regions. The downside of globalization has negatively affected the overall process of development. This is manifested in the increasing digital divide, rising income inequalities and the concentration of economic power through mega-mergers. Weak or small economies have thus been marginalized.

It is therefore becoming increasingly evident that if we want globalization to work for all, as envisioned by our leaders in the Millennium Declaration, the economic, financial and social challenges confronting humanity will have to be addressed in a coherent manner by all stakeholders. This will require greater cooperation between Governments of Member States of the United Nations and other, non-State actors, such as the Bretton Woods institutions, civil society and the private sector, and greater harmony in their shared endeavours to promote development.

Based on this premise, Pakistan welcomes cooperation between the United Nations and other stakeholders and acknowledges the positive role such partnerships can play in facilitating the flow of financial resources and technical know-how, including research and development, capacity-building and sharing experiences in various realms of development. We believe that today's complex challenges can be addressed only through a collaborative and coherent approach involving the Member Governments of the United Nations, institutional stakeholders, the private sector and civil society. In fact, the only solution to these maladies is to confront realities, build consensus and address challenges collectively, in a spirit of cooperation and mutual understanding.

In other words, we need global partnerships in order to evenly distribute the benefits of globalization, promote the cherished objectives of the United Nations and attain the development goals of the Millenium Declaration.

We also recognize the pivotal role the private sector can play in achieving the other objectives of the major United Nations summits and conferences, particularly in the areas of trade, debt, investment, technology and industrial cooperation. Similarly, it can also make positive contributions in the operational activities of the United Nations, which target the disadvantaged groups and the poorest segments of society.

However, we look forward to giving a shape and a form to this relationship by evolving modalities of interaction and framing rules of engagement between the United Nations and other relevant stakeholders through a transparent intergovernmental process. This would require protracted dialogue between the United Nations and the interested negotiating partners on all aspects of cooperation, including responsibilities and obligations. Needless to say, in any such exercise the United Nations has the pivotal role to play. In fact, the parameters for building partnership should be determined by the General Assembly, and it should be grounded in the purposes and principles of the Charter. Let me reiterate that the guiding principle for global partnership should be paragraph 20 of the Millennium Declaration, which stipulates that strong partnership with the private sector will be developed in pursuit of development and poverty eradication.

In this context, we support the views expressed by the Members States, also contained in paragraph 39 of the report, that the partnership arrangements should be based on clearly defined definitions, principles and criteria. These guidelines should clearly stipulate the delineation of responsibilities and roles, accountability,

transparency and commitment to maintaining the independence, integrity and impartiality of the United Nations. Furthermore, the guidelines should aim at serving the goals and purposes of the United Nations system and respect the sovereignty and supremacy of States.

We would like to express in no uncertain terms that States are the principal organizations constituted by the people. The overall organizational structure of international relations is the inter-State system. It has been universally recognized that there is no substitute for States. Any cooperation between the United Nations and non-State actors, therefore, should not challenge the intergovernmental nature of the United Nations — in particular, its intergovernmental decision-making procedure.

While we are discussing the issue from the United Nations perspective, we should not forget that partnerships between the United Nations and relevant partners would be meaningless unless we looked at it from a "pro-poor" perspective. In other words, the cooperation between the United Nations and the relevant partners should focus on the realization of the development goals and targets set out in the Millenium Declaration and other major United Nations conferences and summits: to free the people from the abject and dehumanizing conditions of extreme poverty and underdevelopment. We therefore agree with the recommendation in paragraph 115 of the report that the overriding purpose of this cooperation should be to enable the United Nations to serve its Member States and their peoples more effectively.

We believe that people are the most precious resource of Member States. The United Nations and its global partners should therefore make all possible efforts to save the people from the scourge of hunger, disease and malnutrition. In this context, we would very much appreciate civil society and the private sector joining hands with the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and the World Health Organization (WHO) in encouraging Governments to make medicines accessible to people with HIV/AIDS, asking the World Trade Organization to relax its binding rules on intellectual property rights for life-saving drugs, requesting multinational pharmaceutical companies to stop the monopolistic pricing of medicines, which too few of the poor can afford, and asking multilateral financial institutions and donor Governments to free humanity from debt traps.

Mr. Darwish (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): I begin by expressing our appreciation of the Secretary-General's report on global partnerships, which contains ideas on the future relationship between the United Nations, civil society and the private sector. The report contains the views of Member States and non-State actors. In this regard, we would like to express our support for an honest, constructive dialogue bringing together interested partners from Member States and representatives of civil society and the private sector with the purpose of reaching agreement on guidelines and standards governing future relationships between the United Nations and non-State actors in the context of global partnerships.

Building global partnerships should serve the goals of the United Nations, as set out in the Charter, particularly the promotion of development and the alleviation of poverty. From our point of view, this is a logical development of working methods on the national and international levels in order to respond to the rapidly changing global political and economic situation. This requires addressing the challenges of globalization and making use of its potential to promote economic development and progress, which in turn, requires the adaptation of existing relevant national and international institutions. These must be modified to address existing imbalances rather than to worsen them, especially in view of the growing democracy deficit in the mechanisms of international decision-making. The approach to global partnerships must take into account the effective participation of developing countries in formulating such mechanisms and new methods so that they truly reflect their interests in a balanced way for the benefits of all actors.

We welcome all existing initiatives and partnerships undertaken to strengthen cooperation between the United Nations and all interested parties and to serve the purposes and principles of the United Nations. However, we do not see the need for a hasty endorsement of any of those initiatives before reaching consensus in the dialogue I have mentioned on the guidelines and standards governing these partnerships. Consequently, we must assess existing arrangements and reach agreement on what should be implemented in the future. We also feel that some of the existing initiatives require adjustments to their guiding principles in order to reflect the interests of the

developing and developed nations rather than promote the interests of one group to the detriment of the other.

We welcome the provisions on social responsibility of direct foreign investments by multinational corporations regarding standards of employment and the environment, respect for the environment and respect for human rights. But they should not be linked to other, equally important principles, such as those of encouraging direct foreign investment in all developing nations and the need to establish a dialogue on the causes of the imbalances in the distribution of that investment and its concentration in a limited number of countries. This is a matter of top priority for many developing nations. It is not enough to use the achieving of balance in the distribution of direct foreign investments tied to national environmental and economic policies as a pretext. This is illogical, because many developing nations have endured enormous burdens as a result of making economic and political reforms that cost a great deal in terms of opening their markets to foreign competition and creating a favourable investment environment. The promise of attracting foreign investment and resources has not been realized. This raises many questions, and one wonders about the soundness of the proposed framework.

In concluding, I wish to emphasize how important it is that any dialogue on future global partnerships must ensure adequate representation of national private sector representatives of the developing countries so that we can achieve a desired balance. National efforts are the basis for mobilizing all efforts to achieve development and the creation of a stimulating domestic investment environment. I stress here that we should not rush to adopt standards or guidelines at the international level regarding the domestic economic environment of the developing nations, even if those standards are voluntary, unless there is active and appropriate participation by representatives of developing countries, so that all those rules and standards will be examined thoroughly and agreed to by the developing nations. That would ensure that those standards and rules are not dictated by a handful of countries to the detriment of others.

The Acting President: In accordance with the decision taken earlier, I now call on the observer of Switzerland.

Mr. Staehelin (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): My delegation wishes at the outset to thank the Secretary-General for his excellent report on cooperation between the United Nations and all relevant partners, in particular the private sector. This document and its annexes give an extremely exhaustive overview of existing ways and means for cooperation between the United Nations and its various partners, while identifying matters that remain open in this regard. It also formulates very relevant recommendations on how to improve this cooperation.

A year ago the Millennium Declaration gave the opportunity for the high-level meeting of heads of State and Governments to reaffirm their faith in the United Nations Organization and its Charter, a vital foundation for a more peaceful, prosperous and just world. On this basis, the international community decided to spare no effort to promote peace and security, eradicate poverty, protect our environment and promote human rights and democracy.

Against this background, it is essential to obtain the full support of all relevant partners, in particular the private sector. The latter's role is crucial, if only as a result of the enormous flows of private capital and their great impact on the life of many of us. This year, for example, foreign private investment amounted to over $1,000 billion. However, narrow short-term economic considerations all too often still seem to dictate the objectives and strategies of enterprises. As a result, the majority do not take into account either social or environmental aspects in their activities, even when these aspects are recognized as being vital. Therefore, we need to find convincing approaches in order to encourage them to modify their perspectives and assist them to do this.

I wish to stress in this regard, however, that this increased role played by the private sector, as we see it, does not mean that the enterprises can or even want to take the place of States. By analogy, the emergence of a civil society at the international level has not altered the fundamental role played by States. We are convinced that the State, civil society and the private sector are essentially complementary. The Secretary-General's report demonstrates perfectly the need to clarify the respective responsibilities of global actors and the importance of being able to overcome the mistrust and misunderstandings that may exist between them.

At a time characterized by the growing scarcity of governmental resources made available for international cooperation in all its aspects, we all realize that we need to be able to do more with less. In this regard, without giving up our efforts to try to increase again the amount of public assistance available for development, we need to learn to work together and in particular to develop public-private partnerships that can serve common interests efficiently.

In order to do this, we need new tools and a new culture of cooperation. Switzerland finds particularly interesting the development of policy dialogue with the private sector, along with awareness-raising and promotion of the objectives of the United Nations — "advocacy" — undertaken together with non-State actors. These are particularly useful and effective approaches in order to push forward the millennium commitments.

The many and varied efforts of the United Nations in this regard are extremely promising. We cite in particular those of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), which, over the years, either alone or as part of a network, has mobilized tremendous energy and considerable finances to help it fulfil its mandate. The Global Compact is also a very important and interesting initiative, which we support confidently and with commitment. The Global Compact has tremendous potential for providing a platform for fundamental values to catalyse innovative forms of partnership to mobilize financial resources to benefit development efforts. The Global Compact is also pioneering in its activity in favouring an integrated approach to civil enterprise responsible in its sphere of influence for the impact of its activities on the various communities concerned and their environments.

We have noted with satisfaction that the number of companies endorsing the fundamental values of the Global Compact, both in the North and in the South, continues to increase since its official launch last year. We realize, however, that the Global Compact is still in its development phase. The initiative has demonstrated some youthful weaknesses. Therefore, we encourage a constructive but critical attitude towards the activities of the Global Compact and of the companies that have decided to participate in it. It is crucial to avoid reducing this initiative to a cosmetic action that brings no positive change of attitude on the part of the partners involved.

In our view, the Global Compact — as in the case of all public-private partnerships initiated into the framework of the United Nations — must therefore respect a certain number of simple and effective rules. First of all, it must fully safeguard the integrity and independence of the United Nations. Then, it has to function with the greatest possible transparency. Finally, its partners have to contribute to the realization of the objectives of the Organization. The establishment of guidelines for the partnerships between the United Nations and the private sector, which are to be revised regularly in response to developments in the global political and economic environment, is therefore indispensable.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

I should like to inform members that a draft resolution under this agenda item will be submitted at a later date.

Agenda item 171

Observance of the International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict

Draft resolution (A/56/L.8)

The Acting President: I give the floor to the representative of Kuwait to introduce draft resolution A/56/L.8.

Mr. Abulhasan (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, my delegation would like to express its deep appreciation to Member States for their support of the initiative taken by Kuwait to have item 171, under consideration today, entitled "Observance of the International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict", included in our agenda. This shows the interest of Member States in directing the efforts of this Organization towards meeting the challenges that we face during this century, which many consider a legacy of the last century, with all the negative and adverse consequences that we have all witnessed and from which no aspect of life has been safe, including the environment we live in.

The Millennium Summit was a very important turning point for us in the area of international cooperation to protect the environment we live in and to preserve it for future generations. Everybody agrees

that the environment, in all its natural elements, has clearly been affected by daily human activities. Whether deliberately or involuntarily, we exploit the environment in a manner that depletes it and sometimes has an adverse impact on it.

Since Kuwait took the initiative, with the support of Member States, to include this item, we have noted that there is an understanding among all States of our preoccupations and those of the other Gulf States vis-à-vis the environmental situation there. The wars and armed conflicts that we have witnessed have had a negative impact on all aspects of life, particularly and most regrettably on the environment, at all levels and in all spheres. This has prompted us to take action within the framework of the United Nations towards a global appeal for greater awareness of the importance of preserving and protecting the environment, particularly during armed conflicts.

We can probably all agree that surviving the destruction and scourge of war is not worthwhile if there is not a peaceful and clean environment for human beings after wars and armed conflicts come to an end. In such a case anyone who survives the scourge of war will face another form of war — the struggle for survival and protection from toxins that have filled the environment as a result of wars and the use of the environment and of natural resources as a means of warfare and destruction.

Living things, ecosystems and natural resources in the Gulf have been destroyed on a large scale because of the armed conflicts and wars that we have witnessed, making the environment extremely fragile. The results of this destruction have significantly affected the health of the people of the region.

My delegation would like to remind everyone that the use of natural resources and the destruction of the environment for strategic or military objectives are a flagrant violation of nature. They are also a gross violation of international law, in particular, of article 35 of the Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol I), which entered into force in 1979. Paragraph 3 stipulates,

> "It is prohibited to employ methods or means of warfare which are intended, or may be expected, to cause widespread, long-term and severe damage to the natural environment."

Before introducing the paragraphs and substance of the draft resolution under consideration, I would like to reaffirm my Government's gratitude to all Member States, and particularly those that have sponsored the draft resolution contained in document A/56/L.8. Our thanks also go to those countries that have joined the consensus for the support of this initiative. They have done so in a way that makes us very optimistic that the international community will continue to safeguard a secure life for future generations and that security measures will be comprehensive, and not restricted only to the prevention of war or to preventive diplomacy for the maintenance of international peace and security. Rather, they must be part of a culture of peace and of the principle of peace-building in post-conflict areas, so as to guarantee a healthy environment for those who have survived the scourge and the misery of war.

Before speaking on behalf of the States sponsoring draft resolution A/56/L.8, I would like to point out that since this document was issued, the following States have joined the sponsors: Bangladesh, Belize, Brazil, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Egypt, El Salvador, Fiji, Ghana, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Malaysia, Mauritania, Mexico, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Pakistan, the Philippines, Poland, Romania, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Somalia, Sudan, Tunisia, the United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay and Zambia.

Those States have joined the original sponsors — Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bhutan, Chile, the Comoros, Costa Rica, Djibouti, Ecuador, Gabon, Honduras, India, Kuwait, Maldives, Mali, the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Vanuatu.

The three preambular paragraphs of the draft resolution are general in nature, and reflect elements agreed upon by our leaders at the Millennium Summit with regard to the importance for future generations of protecting the environment. The preambular part also takes into consideration the fact that the environment has been badly exploited and damaged during armed conflicts. The operative part of the draft resolution includes a specific request for the international community to respect the environment and prevent its exploitation during armed conflict.

Operative paragraph 1 would declare 6 November of each year as the International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict. Paragraph 3 would request the Secretary-General to ensure the implementation of the resolution and to promote it within the framework of the international community.

The sponsors of the draft resolution hope that it will be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Hybl (United States of America): The United States would like to take this opportunity to reaffirm its long friendship with Kuwait and our close security and military cooperation relationship, which reflect our steadfast commitment to ensuring the security of the Gulf region. We support Kuwait's leadership in the area of conservation and restoration of the marine environment.

We have joined in the consensus on this draft resolution with the clear understanding that our approval does nothing to restrict the rights of the United States or any other nation to take all necessary actions under international law and all relevant international agreements, and that the provisions of the draft resolution are consistent with the 1977 Convention on the Prohibition of Military or Any Other Hostile Use of Environmental Modification Techniques.

Mr. Aldouri (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): Interest in the protection of the environment has fortunately, increased greatly during the past quarter-century and in the beginning of this century. Iraq supports fully the idea of preserving the environment and of not exploiting it — not just during periods of war but also in peacetime.

Iraq was, and still is, a victim of severe environmental pollution due to wars and armed conflicts. The air and water in my country have been polluted and will remain so for the next five million years. This state of affairs began in 1991 and had led to the spread of serious diseases, which daily claim the lives of hundreds of Iraqi women, children and elderly persons.

Iraq has lost almost a million and a half people due mostly to environmental pollution caused by armed conflict. That pollution, as I said, will continue for millions of years for one major reason: the use of depleted uranium. In addition, in 1991 hundreds of thousands of bombs rained down on Iraq; as a matter of fact, Iraq is still being bombed even as we speak.

Iraq has previously submitted the details of the crime of genocide that has been committed against it under many items discussed by the General Assembly. For this reason, we do not believe that many countries in the world can understand the impact of armed conflict on the environment better than Iraq.

On this basis, Iraq acted in good faith and with a high level of transparency when Kuwait submitted the draft resolution on the prevention of the exploitation of the environment in war and armed conflict. Delegations have spoken to me about Iraq's stance on the Kuwaiti draft resolution. Our answer has always been that we support the draft resolution. We are not against it. We encouraged delegations to support the draft even before we heard details about it.

Iraq believed that this matter would be dealt with in the General Assembly in the framework of an international humanitarian perspective aimed at pooling international efforts every year to defend and support this concept, with a view to safeguarding the common interests of all of humanity.

Regrettably, when Kuwait submitted the draft resolution contained in document A/56/L.8, it became clear that the draft was not as we had thought. We heard about the draft last Friday, and, upon studying it, we found that it clearly reflected narrow regional political objectives, and not a comprehensive perspective with a global universal objective. That is why I am speaking before the Assembly today. We wish to address this point, which, quite frankly, we consider to be of a very serious nature.

Iraq fully supports the idea of the observance of an International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflicts. We hope that States will join Kuwait in sponsoring the draft resolution. We had hoped, however, that the sponsors would have presented the General Assembly with the idea of an International Day that had clear meaning and significance and that would unite all of humanity, thereby helping it to pool its efforts. This would have given a humanitarian dimension to the protection of the environment. Instead, the draft is based on very limited political considerations that serve only the narrow political interests of one State. I am confident that the future political dimensions of the topic were not drawn

to the attention of the States that were mentioned by name by the Ambassador of Kuwait.

Kuwait wishes to convince the sponsoring States to observe, on 6 November of each year, the International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict. However, we firmly believe that those sponsors have not considered this matter in depth. In fact, November 6 is a Kuwaiti national Day observed annually in Kuwait. Of course, we do not object to the fact that it is a Kuwaiti Day and not a universal Day. But the choice of this date constitutes a very serious precedent, in our view, which will have a negative impact in future on the joint efforts of the international community to protect the environment, because of the fact that this day has particular significance for some States. There is nothing to prevent us from adopting this date, a national Day in Kuwait, because it does not matter much to us.

But we fear that the future will arouse old hatreds and that the observance might be exploited for narrow political objectives that might not lead to the peace we all hope for. The choice of this Day will impact negatively on unified international efforts to protect the environment and will certainly diminish the credibility and universality of the United Nations. It could turn the Organization's work programme into a tool to serve the narrow, national self-interests of one State with all the political sensitivities that that entails, in a truly exaggerated way.

Therefore, Iraq raises doubts as to the credibility of this Day for the following reasons: first of all, 6 November is not a day that would receive international consensus if the States concerned knew of its significance and the real reasons behind its choice, whether they be political or environmental. It could be exploited and directed politically against another State.

Secondly, this proposed Day is a Kuwaiti choice for well known reasons. It is a Kuwaiti national day and cannot be changed into an international Day. This would inevitably have a negative impact because of its clear political significance to those who live in the region. We would like to transcend the past and move into a future filled with peace and security. We do not want to dig up past events that occurred decades ago.

Thirdly, in the area of environmental pollution, humankind has witnessed events of great significance over time. One of these historical dates could be chosen for everyone without offending sensitivities or bringing up emotional issues concerning the proposed Day. In this way, the States concerned, governmental and non-governmental organizations — all people — could observe such a Day. All of us together could truly observe it, away from wars and armed conflicts and their negative impact on the environment.

Turning to the impact of war on the environment, one day that we should declare is a day commemorating the Rio Earth Summit, a very important date. The United Nations Millennium Declaration on the protection of the environment, for example, is another suggestion. Yet another is the General Assembly resolution establishing the Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme. Everybody knows this date, and everybody knows what happened to some States — the destruction of their environment and the killing of their people. We do not want to observe such a Day on 6 November. We want to look forward to the future, as I pointed out.

On the basis of what I have already said, my delegation strongly objects to operative paragraph 1 of the draft resolution on preventing the exploitation of the environment in war and armed conflict. We call upon States to agree to an international Day that would be truly international and known to others. The reasons for choosing such a Day should be known to the entire international community.

We caution the international community not to fall into a trap. It is a trap based on a narrow, self-interested policy that would likely be used to exploit the United Nations and its lofty humanitarian principles, including those pertaining to the environment. It would bring about short-sighted and limited political gains far from the main objective — which is a fundamental humanitarian value that all countries have sought to observe, including Iraq, when it was added the agenda of the fifty-sixth session of the United Nations.

A few days ago in this Hall sensitivity was expressed with regard to the choice of a specific day for an international observance concerning a very serious issue. There was general response to the selection of this Day, because it deals with a specific day, a specific State and specific sensitivities. The General Assembly has not chosen that Day. We call

upon the Assembly today to choose another Day, one that is well known and that can be agreed upon by all.

Therefore, we call from this rostrum for a vote on operative paragraph 1 of draft resolution A/56/L.8, because we believe that it is not compatible with our objectives. It is not valid, it is not an appropriate way to reflect the idea of the exploitation of the environment in armed conflict.

The Acting President: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 54/195 of 17 December 1999, I now call on the Observer for the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources.

Mr. Waugh (International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources): Armed conflict may lead to the overuse or misuse of natural resources, environmental degradation and loss of species. Armed conflict often takes place in areas of critical biodiversity that are particularly sensitive to its impact. The situation is compounded when the exploitation of natural resources is the objective of conflict, or is a means to finance conflict. Exploitation of the environment in times of armed conflict forecloses options for sustainable livelihoods. The identification of a day to reflect on this phenomenon will provide us with a useful means to focus attention on the steps necessary to address it.

The members of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN), meeting in Amman, Jordan, in October 2000 at the Second World Conservation Congress (WCC), addressed the need for international action in WCC resolution 2.40, entitled "Natural resource security in situations of conflict".

The IUCN recognizes the need for a greater understanding of the underlying causes of conflict and, particularly, or how conflict affects the conservation of biodiversity. The IUCN has urged its members to identify those conflict situations that relate to the control of natural resources and to bring them to the attention of the Security Council, or other appropriate entities, with proposals for measures to deter those who would sustain such conflicts.

The IUCN will work with the international community to identify approaches that could help limit environmental degradation in situations of conflict. Of particular concern today is the — often illegal — exploitation of natural resources to further finance conflict, thus fuelling a cycle of human and natural resource abuse. Resources vulnerable to exploitation in conflict situations include, inter alia, timber, minerals, water, fish, bush meat and ivory. Threats from conflict extend also to globally significant resources protected under international law, such as World Heritage Sites. The IUCN notes that some positive steps have been taken to create barriers to markets for illegally procured resources, such as certification programmes currently being developed for natural resources during armed conflict as well as in peacetime.

In this regard, the IUCN invites attention to the positive steps taken at the East Asia Ministerial Conference on Forest Law Enforcement and Governance, organized by the World Bank Institute and hosted by Indonesia from 11 to 13 September, to address illegal logging. In the Ministerial Declaration adopted at that meeting, the participants committed themselves to intensified efforts at the national and regional level to address violations of forest law, to cooperate in the prevention of the movement of illegal timber and to improve forest-related governance. Similar meetings are planned for Africa and Latin America. The fact that the international community is aware of the severity of this particular problem and that it is willing to take positive steps to address it, is particularly encouraging.

Just as the exploitation of natural resources can exacerbate and fuel conflict, international cooperation to manage shared resources regionally can be a tool to promote peace. The IUCN works to promote cooperation for the management of shared resources, and has found a particularly useful tool in the transboundary park or protected area, sometimes known as a peace park. In 2003, the IUCN and the Republic of South Africa will host the Fifth World Parks Congress in Durban, South Africa. Prominent on the programme for that Congress is a review of the application of the peace park concept. We encourage all Governments to participate in this landmark event, and we would be pleased to cooperate, through the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas, in the development of transboundary protected areas.

The ability to promote equitable and sustainable management of natural resources must not be undermined through exploitation of the environment in armed conflict and war. A day of reflection should help to draw attention not only to the harm that is done to

sustainable development through the exploitation of the environment in war and armed conflict, but also to the positive steps that can be, and are being, taken to address this serious problem.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item. We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/56/L.8. A separate vote has been requested on operative paragraph 1 of the draft resolution. Is there any objection to this request?

I see none. I shall therefore put this paragraph to the vote.

I now put to the vote operative paragraph 1 of draft resolution A/56/L.8.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Cameroon, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Israel, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Malawi, Maldives, Mauritania, Mexico, Mozambique, Namibia, New Zealand, Oman, Philippines, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, Slovakia, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay

Against:

None

Abstaining:

Andorra, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Portugal, Russian Federation, San Marino, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Venezuela, Yugoslavia, Zambia

Operative paragraph 1 of draft resolution A/56/L.8 was adopted by 50 votes to none, with 34 abstentions.

[*Subsequently, the delegations of Egypt and Malaysia informed the Secretariat that they had intended to vote in favour.*]

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/56/L.8 as a whole.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/56/L.8 as a whole?

Draft resolution A/56/L.8 was adopted (resolution 56/4).

The Acting President: I shall now call on the representative of Belgium, who wishes to speak in explanation of position on the resolution just adopted. May I remind delegations that explanations of vote or position are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Charlier (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The European Union recognizes the importance of preventing the exploitation of the environment in armed conflict. The European Union is, however, opposed in principle to the establishment of new United Nations international days. For that reason the European Union abstained in the vote on draft resolution A/56/L.8.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 171?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 28 (*continued*)

Culture of peace

Draft resolution (A/56/L.5)

The Acting President: Members will recall that the General Assembly held the debate on this item at its 29th plenary meeting, held on 22 October 2001.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/56/L.5, entitled "International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World, 2001-2010".

I should like to announce that, since the publication of draft resolution A/56/L.5, the following countries have become sponsors of the draft resolution: Argentina, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Burundi, Cambodia,

Cameroon, Costa Rica, Cuba, Cyprus, Egypt, Eritrea, Gabon, Guyana, India, Jamaica, Madagascar, Malawi, Morocco, Myanmar, Namibia, Nigeria, Philippines, the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation, Senegal, Suriname, Tajikistan, Thailand and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/56/L.5?

Draft resolution A/56/L.5 was adopted (resolution 56/5).

The Acting President: I shall now call on the representative of Israel, who wishes to speak in explanation of position on the resolution just adopted. May I remind delegations that explanations of vote or position are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Ms. Kleitman (Israel): My delegation joined the consensus on the draft resolution just adopted. We would like, however, to register our reservations with respect to the eighth preambular paragraph.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 28?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.